

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

NOTICE OF 1986-87 BUFFALO SEASON

By order of the Montana Fish and Game Commission portions of elk, deer, bear and lion hunting districts 313, 314, 361, and 362 shall be open to the hunting of buffalo for the period from July 1, 1986 through June 30, 1987 by holders of buffalo licenses under the following conditions.

A. Application Procedure

1. Buffalo license application forms will be available to hunters at Helena, Fish, Wildlife and Parks regional offices and general license dealers by March 14. The application must be completed and sent to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 E. 6th, Helena, Montana 59620 between March 17, 1986 and April 18, 1986. Applications must be post-marked by April 18, 1986, and must be accompanied by the \$5.00 nonrefundable drawing fee.
2. A random drawing will be held as soon after April 18, 1986 as is practical. The names, addresses and phone number of the first 250 applicants drawn will be put on a roster, which would be usable for selecting hunters as hunting opportunities arise. The roster will be available at the Helena office and at the seven regional headquarters for public review. All individuals on the roster will be notified by mail of their position on the roster.
3. Immediately after the rosters are compiled, the 250 people on the list will be sent an information packet on the hunt.

B. General Regulations

1. The regulations as listed on the 1986 Big Game Hunting Map shall govern the 1986/1987 buffalo hunting season. The dates shall be July 1, 1986 through June 30, 1987.
2. Hunters must purchase a license when they arrive at the specified location which was given them during the initial notification call. Only cash, money orders, or cashiers checks will be accepted from nonresidents. Department people supervising hunting activity will be prepared to handle the license sale activity. Hunters must provide a current conservation license and if under 18 years old, must provide hunter safety certificate number. A buffalo license fee for residents is \$200 and for non-residents is \$1,000.
3. Only rifle hunting will be allowed (including black powder rifles).
4. One buffalo will be allowed to be taken per hunter per buffalo hunting season. When a buffalo has been killed, the hunter must cut out the proper month and day from the carcass tag and immediately attach the tag to the carcass so it remains visible at all times. It may then be legally transported within or outside Montana.

C. Hunter Notification Procedure and Hunt Format

1. Hunters will be notified by telephone when the department determines a hunting opportunity for buffalo is likely to exist. Telephone calls will be made during the evening between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM, Mountain time, on the day bison are outside Yellowstone Park.
2. A minimum of three attempts will be made that evening to contact each hunter. Attempted calls will be spaced at a minimum of half-hour intervals. Additional calls may be made if necessary. Callers must speak to the hunter directly; family members cannot relay a message. If the department is unable to contact enough hunters to control the bison, the department will take excess animals.
3. If a hunter cannot be contacted, his/her name will be removed from the roster. If a hunter does not wish to participate in the specified hunt he/she will be removed from the roster.
4. Hunters will be advised during the contact call as to the following procedures:

- a) Hunters must be present at the check in point within 36 hours following phone contact or their right to hunt will be forfeited.
 - b) Animal selection will be determined for hunters by the Department in the order the hunter was selected during the drawing. If there is a case that there is more than one hunter available in the field at one time in the same location then the ranking of the individual hunter on the roster will dictate order of buffalo selection.
 - c) Hunters who are not interested in taking the type of animals available will be removed from the roster.
 - d) Hunting activity will be supervised by department employees. Hunters will be required to take specific buffalo as and when directed by the department. If the hunter does not wish to take the buffalo selected by the department his/her opportunity to hunt and license fee will be forfeited.
- 5. Hunters will be given one day to hunt and have a reasonable opportunity to harvest a buffalo. This is after arrival at hunting site.
 - 6. In the event that buffalo are not available to the hunter during the one-day period the license is valid, the license fee will be refunded to the holder and he/she will remain in the same priority on the roster for the next available hunt for that season.

D. Information

- 1. A general information packet will be provided to hunters reviewing information related to brucellosis, field handling of bison, people available to hire for assisting the hunter with field dressing and processing, entrail removal, private landowner contacts where permission may be needed and potential private land access costs.

A synopsis of this information follows:

- 1. All applicants will be informed that approximately half of the buffalo taken last year had brucellosis, a bacterial disease which may infect domestic livestock. Improperly cooked edible tissues of infected animals can also infect humans. Improperly handling bison during field dressing also could pose possible infection to humans. Therefore essential facts and precautions dealing with brucellosis will be given to all applicants, again to the 250 placed on the roster and to those contacted by phone.
- 2. All applicants will be informed of the potential difficulties involved in field dressing a buffalo, including carcass, skin, head and entrail removal, as well as a list of people that can be hired to assist with the field dressing and processing of buffalo, some of which may weigh over 1,000 pounds. The hunter will be responsible for making all desired arrangements for assistance with the indicated sources and will be completely responsible for all aspects of processing the animal in a timely manner including entrail removal and disposal, unless the Department deems it unnecessary.
- 3. All applicants will be informed that buffalo may occur on private land which could affect ease of access, and may require some additional costs to hunters related to particular requirements or logistics in the process of hunting and carcass removal. It will be the sole responsibility of the hunter to make all necessary arrangements with any private landowners prior to arrival.

MONTANA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Ron Marcoux

By: RON MARCOUX, ACTING SECRETARY
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